DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 284 327 EA 019 508

AUTHOR Lynch, Kathleen Kelley
TITLE Political Culture and the Exercise of Power: Combined Effects on Policymaking.
PUB DATE Apr 87
NOTE 31p.; Paper presented at the Annual Meeting of the American Educational Research Association (Washington, DC, April 20-24, 1987).
PUB TYPE Speeches/Conference Papers (150) -- Reports - Research/Technical (143)

EDRS PRICE MF01/PC02 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS Behavior Patterns; *Beliefs; *Educational Finance; *Educational Policy; Elementary Secondary Education; Information Utilization; Interviews; *Political Influences; Political Power; *Politics of Education; Values
IDENTIFIERS Pennsylvania; *Political Culture

ABSTRACT

How implicit assumptions govern the process of policymaking, and how those implicit assumptions are simultaneously consistent with both the political culture of the state and with behaviors that are effective in achieving desired policy outcomes are investigated in this paper. Interview data were gathered from policymakers and analyzed to discover 10 implicit, highly intertwined assumptions in the policy formulation process that include the following: (1) everything in government is relative; (2) nothing significant ever gets accomplished without the leadership having a hand in it; (3) if a policy proposal has no chance of succeeding, do not bring it up in the general assembly; (4) the education committees are collegial and nonpartisan, and the appropriations committees are hierarchical and partisan; (5) special interest groups are informal policymakers, but they are powerful and legitimate in their policymaking role; (6) information is power; (7) the number one problem in education is finance; (8) taxes are an anathema, but if taxes must be raised, ask for money for education; (9) the major policy battles in the general assembly concern the distribution of money; and (10) the life expectancy of any given basic instructional subsidy formula is limited. (WTH)

****
* Reproductions supplied by EDRS are the best that can be made *
* from the original document. *
****

ED284327

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
Office of Educational Research and Improvement
EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)

X This document has been reproduced as received from the person or organization originating it.

☐ Minor changes have been made to improve reproduction quality.

• Points of view or opinions stated in this document do not necessarily represent official OERI position or policy.

"PERMISSION TO REPRODUCE THIS MATERIAL HAS BEEN GRANTED BY

Kathleen Kelley Lynch

TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)."

POLITICAL CULTURE AND THE EXERCISE OF POWER: COMBINED EFFECTS ON POLICYMAKING

Kathleen Kelley Lynch

Littleton, MA Public Schools

EA 019 508

A paper presented at the annual meeting of the American Educational Research Organization, Washington, D.C., April, 1987.

POLITICAL CULTURE AND THE EXERCISE OF POWER: COMBINED EFFECTS ON POLICYMAKING

This paper explores the interrelationship of political culture and the play of power in the policymaking process. In a case study of school finance policymaking in Pennsylvania, a set of related concepts was used to describe policymakers' beliefs and assumptions about values and power, and how those beliefs and assumptions affect process and content in policymaking. The research was part of a larger piece of the Alternative State Policy Mechanism (ASPM) project, which was funded by the National Institute of Education, and which focused on studying the process of formulating education policy in seven policy areas. Pennsylvania was one of six states in which the policy process was studied, and school finance was one of the seven policy mechanisms studied. In Pennsylvania, school finance was found to be the most active of the policy mechanisms, thus providing a sufficiently narrowed focus to assured depth, while utilizing a policy mechanism active enough to display the full range of policymaker values and power-oriented behaviors. The objective of the paper is to demonstrate, using case study data supported by statistical data, how implicit assumptions govern the process of policymaking, and how those implicit assumptions are

simultaneously consistent with both the political culture of the state, and with behaviors which are effective in achieving desired policy outcomes.

The Research Perspective

The working hypothesis of this research was that implicit assumptions govern the process of formulating school finance policy, and that those assumptions were simultaneously consistent with both the political culture of the state policy arena, and with behaviors which are effective in achieving policy objectives. In this study, culture was defined as "...that particular pattern of orientation to political action in which each political system is embedded" (Elazar, 1984, p. 19). The working hypothesis was based on several suppositions:

(1) Policymakers' reports of school finance policy formulation support Elazar's contention that Pennsylvania's predominant political culture is Individualistic.

(2) Lindblom's play of power model accurately describes the policymaking process in Pennsylvania.

(3) The manner in which the play of power proceeds is consistent with the predominant political culture of the state.

The data collected in this study were analyzed with regard to these suppositions, using the grounded theory

approach of Glaser and Strauss (1967).

Elazar's (1984) political culture model was used in this study as a framework within which to analyze the predominant values of the state policy arena as they impacted upon policymakers working to forge school finance policy. Elazar's political culture model postulates that certain unique characteristics of states affect the ways in which their policymaking bodies function. The political culture model describes three political culture prototypes: the Individualistic, the Moralistic, and the Traditionalistic. Each political culture prototype views government and politics differently, and each exerts a unique influence on political activity. The Individualistic political culture views the political arena as a marketplace in which government is basically responsive, there is a penetrating concern with economic development, and political party influence is strong. The Moralistic political culture is based on the concept of the commonwealth. This political culture encourages broad participation, and supports governmental action to advance the public good. Within this culture, it is possible to have highly political nonpartisan systems. The traditionalistic political culture seeks to maintain the existing social order, rather than to bring about change. Political participation is expected only from members of a self-perpetuating elite who inherit their political power through social position and family ties.

The Traditionalistic political culture supports a conservative custodial role rather than an initiatory one, unless there is strong pressure from the outside. The political culture prototypes form a continuum with the Moralistic and Traditionalistic political cultures at opposing ends of the continuum, and the Individualistic political culture in the middle of the continuum. Elazar maintains that the Individualistic political culture is predominant in Pennsylvania.

Lindblom's (1980) play of power model provided a framework for understanding the purposeful exercise of control in policymaking. Lindblom described policymaking activity as a game-like progression of strategic moves made by a limited number of policy actors who exercise control through partisan analysis, threats, exchange, mutual control and adjustment, and authority. The data collected in the study supported Lindblom's description of policymaking as one which was valid for school finance policy development in Pennsylvania. The model also highlighted the importance of informal as well as formal policymakers in the policy process. Lindblom's play of power model provides a powerful perspective on school finance policy formulation in Pennsylvania. When combined with data concerning the predominant political culture of the state, the play of power highlights the important implicit assumptions which govern the process by which policy is formulated.

The choice of these two theoretical frameworks was based on a review of prior studies of Pennsylvania, which found that certain characteristics of the state and of policymaking endured over time. These include a strong two-party system in which the party in control maintains power with a very slim majority, a professionalized legislature with relatively large staffs, the use of bargaining and logrolling as policy formulation techniques, and the involvement of special interest groups as key policy actors. A review of the literature on state policy formulation indicated that prior studies of policymaking focused primarily on either political culture or on the exercise of power, and suggested the need for a description of policymaking which takes into consideration the predominant political culture of the state, the purposeful exercise between and among policymakers, and the implicit assumptions which result from the combined influence of political culture and politically useful behavior. The need for a descriptive analysis of policymaking within state-specific context was confirmed by an analysis of ASPM statistical data. Interview data was gathered from both formal and informal policymakers and analyzed within these two theoretical frameworks to discover ten implicit assumptions which govern the development of school finance policy in Pennsylvania.

The Methodology

In this research, field study methodology was used. The research focused on the complex process of policymaking and on the implicit assumptions which dominate the policy arena. As a research methodology, field study possessed characteristics ideally suited to the study complex and implicit phenomena: a gradually sharpening focus, an exploratory nature, and the ability to generate rich, descriptive detail. The use of field study provided the best opportunity to study a complex system as a unified whole.

The design components included a study-within-a-study format, since this research took shape as a self-contained study within the larger ASPM research project. The present researcher was part of the ASPM team which collected data, and which met periodically to compare data and discuss research findings. The main data collection technique was interviewing formal and informal policymakers. Qualitative data were managed by microcomputer, through the use of a commercially prepared file program which provided flexibility and manipulability of data. Validity and reliability were assured through cross-checking of data with other team members, by triangulation of data, and by managing the researcher's role, social situations and conditions, and methods of data collection of analysis.

Two rounds of interviews were conducted, one unfocused and one focused. In the unfocused round of data collection, interviews with formal policy actors were taped. In these interviews, policy actors were asked open-ended questions about the policy formulation process and the actors in that process, as well as any "stream of consciousness" comments and descriptions they may have about policymaking in Pennsylvania. In the focused round of data collection, formal and informal policy actors were interviewed using three interview protocols which yielded quantitative data. The focused interviews were also tape recorded, and informants were encouraged to expand on their survey responses.

The case study of Pennsylvania analyzed the verbatim utterances of policymakers as recorded on audio tape. The data generated by the interview protocols were analyzed separately using statistical methods. Only after separate analyses were completed were the qualitative and quantitative data compared.

The tape recorded data collected in these interviews were entered into computerized data records, and sorted using categories taken from the theoretical frameworks of Lindblom and Elazar. Data records were compared with other data records and with theory for evidence of political culture values dominant in the Pennsylvania policy arena, and for evidence of the behaviors policymakers used to

exercise control in the policymaking process. The data were then compared with statistical data from the other ASPM sample states.

Discussion of Findings

The data collected in the case study indicate that the characteristics of Elazar's Individualistic political culture are consistent with the dominant political values expressed by policymakers in the descriptions of school finance policymaking in Pennsylvania. While the data support the Individualistic political culture as dominant, there was also some evidence of the Moralistic political culture in the operation of the Education Committees of the Pennsylvania Legislature. These committees were found to be more issue-oriented, less partisan, and tended to talk out differences rather than follow strict party lines. The Individualistic political culture was found to dominate the Pennsylvania policy arena, while the Moralistic orientation of the Education Committees served as a restraint on the marketplace tendencies of the dominant Individualistic culture.

The statistical analysis of the ASPM data confirmed the Individualistic political culture as dominant in Pennsylvania. The analysis of statistical data in all six states "...provides strong support for the existence of political culture in all attitudes of education policymakers in these states" (Wirt, Mitchell and Marshall, 1985, p. 57).

Based on an analysis of the statistical data, Wirt, Mitchell and Marshall (1985), found that policy decisions made by policy leaders may depend more or less on actual resources than on expectations leaders have about how the political system operates.

The statistical analysis of informants' responses to the interview protocol indicated substantial differences in the ways the six sample states attend to school finance policy issues. In the area of school finance, the ASPM statistical data revealed "...three strong, statistically independent, and substantially meaningful multiple discriminant functions that identify overall patterns of approach to state policy..." (Mitchell, Marshall and Wirt, 1985, p. 46). The data also indicate strong evidence that Lindblom's play of power model accurately described policymaking activity in Pennsylvania. As a result of the data analysis, ten implicit assumptions were identified which appear to be governing the development of school finance policy in Pennsylvania. These assumptions are consistent with both the predominant political culture of the state policy arena, and with behaviors which are effective in the play of power. From the range of behaviors which are acceptable within the state's value system, policymakers select behaviors that will be successful for them in achieving their policy objectives. Thus, from among all possible effective policy behaviors and the political

culture characteristics of Pennsylvania, a set of implicit assumptions emerge which are simultaneously consistent with both the political culture and the effective exercise of control policymaking.

The assumptions for policymakers in formulating school finance policy were identified by the informants through their descriptions of school finance policy. Informants did not necessarily identify them as assumptions, but expressed them as the real conditions, attitudes, and values which constrained their work in developing policy. Those conditions, attitudes and values which appeared as recurring themes in the reports of many informants in a variety of situations were culled from the data, considered within the theoretical framework of political culture orientation and the play of power, and restated as assumptions which govern the school finance policymaking process in Pennsylvania.

The data in the case study suggest that two assumptions are primary: everything in government is relative; and the number one problem in education is school finance. The other assumptions are related to either or both of these primary assumptions, although the importance of one assumption with regard to the others was not established by the data. In fact, the data indicate that all the assumptions are highly intertwined and overlapping in the school finance policy formulation process. They are separated here for the purpose of delineating and explaining

them. These policy formulation assumptions define effective policymaking behavior which is simultaneously consistent with the political culture of the Pennsylvania policy arena, and with the play of power.

Everything in government is relative. This implicit assumption reflects the marketplace atmosphere of the policy arena in Pennsylvania. The data indicate that policymakers continually make trade-off decisions as they struggle to find a level of value for education that is consistent with the current conditions in the marketplace. Should you give more money to education; and if you do give more to education, where does it come from--welfare, medicare, medicaid? What about the large urban centers and the small rural areas? How will their needs be balanced against the demands of of the suburban areas? Policymakers must make trade-off decisions based on the relative value of education vis-a-vis other state funded services.

Education derives its relative market value from several sources. The demands of the electorate established the value of education in the policy marketplace. In some instances, the general public may make their wishes known directly to legislators or to the leaders of the interest group which represent them in Harrisburg. A change in the overall environment can also affect the relative value of education in the policymaking arena. The struggle to establish the relative value of education in the

policymaking arena provides a means of exercising control in the play of power.

Nothing significant ever gets accomplished without the leadership having a hand in it. The relative value of education is also established by the leadership of the General Assembly. The dominance of the legislative leadership, a theme woven through the data, is rooted in the concept of authority as a mechanism of control in the play of power, and in partisanship as a cultural value. The strength of the committee system in the Pennsylvania General Assembly makes it possible for policymaking activity to be controlled by a few key legislative leaders. The General Assembly has a Majority Leader and a Minority Whip, and the Education and Appropriations Committees of the House of Representatives and the Senate have both Majority and Minority Chairpersons. The legislative leadership is also the party leadership. The authority of the leadership is based on political party cohesiveness, and on the ability to control the behavior of individual members. The data clearly indicate that policymakers acceded to the authority of the legislative leadership, and that legislative leaders maintained their authority through their ability to affect the exchange of benefits, and through the ability to impose sanctions on recalcitrant members.

If a policy proposal has no chance of succeeding, don't bring it up in the General Assembly. This implicit

assumption also reflects the dominance of the legislative leadership in the school finance policy formulation process. A piece of legislation will not be reported out of committee if it has little or no chance of succeeding. Policies may be reworked in committee so that they have a chance of being passed, or they may be buried in committee at the instruction of the legislative leadership. Since education almost always involves money, education policy can be expected to pass through the Appropriations Committee before reaching the floor of the General Assembly for a vote. Since the Appropriations Committees are highly partisan and controlled by the leadership, the leadership exercises considerable control over what policy proposals are brought up for a vote, and which are not. It is unlikely that a proposal with little support would be brought to the floor of the General Assembly, given the formal structure of the committee system. To bring up a proposal which has little or no chance of succeeding would necessitate by-passing the leadership. The threat of sanctions by the leadership would discourage such action.

To bring up a policy which has little or no chance of passing upsets the normal functioning of the marketplace, and may affect a policy actor's credibility in the policy arena. The basis of marketplace activity is the exchange of commodities which have value, even though the value of a commodity may fluctuate. A policy proposal which has little

or no value for policymakers is worthless as a medium for exchange. Furthermore, if a policy proposal lacks support from the leadership, it has no value as a medium of exchange because of the control exercised by the leadership over the policy formulation process. Another possibility is that a policy proposal might not pass because of the strong opposition among policymakers rather than due to lack of interest. A level of opposition so high as to make passage of the policy unlikely could negatively affect a policymaker's credibility, an important commodity in the play of power.

The Education Committees are collegial and non-partisan; the Appropriations Committees are hierarchical and partisan. The committee system is the workhorse of the Pennsylvania General Assembly. The committees which exercise direct control over school finance policy are the Education Committees of the House of Representatives and the Senate, and the Appropriations Committees of the House of Representatives and the Senate. The Education Committees forge the content of education policy, and then send the proposed policy to Appropriations to have a fiscal note attached. These two committees have very different styles of functioning.

The Education Committees tend to talk differences out, and to invite wide participation in the process of developing policy. Informants from these committees

reported that they work across party lines and between houses of the General Assembly in forging the content of education policy. Their style of functioning is more oriented toward the Moralistic political culture than the Individualistic. In the Education Committees, education has intrinsic worth which transcends partisan politics and hierarchical control. In contrast, the Appropriations Committees are highly partisan and controlled by the leadership. According to policymakers, it is in the Appropriations Committees that the major policy battles are fought. In the Appropriations Committees, policymakers are told what they have to do by the legislative leadership. In these committees, the trade-off decisions are made, and control is exercised through the exchange of money in the form of state education subsidies. The influence of the Individualistic political culture and the exercise of control in the play of power are evident in the style of the Appropriations Committees, while the Education Committees seem more oriented toward the Moralistic political culture.

The style of each committee serves a purpose in school finance policy formulation. As Elazar (1984) points out, each political culture is self-destructive in its purest form. The coexistence of the Moralistic political orientation with the dominant Individualistic one provides the balance necessary in the development of school finance policy. The Moralistic orientation of the Education

Committees prevents education from being totally at the mercy of the marketplace. The Education Committees' style provides recognition that education does have value independent of the marketplace and partisan politics. Since the policy arena in Pennsylvania tends toward Individualism, a policy forged in a Moralistic style would not be acceptable to the broad constituency necessary for the measure to pass the General Assembly and become law. Thus, the Appropriations Committee provides a place to reshape school finance policy in a format consistent with the value system of state government.

State Government reacts, but doesn't initiate; in the General Assembly, the merit of an issue has to be sold. Since the General Assembly responds rather than initiates, the merit of an issue must be sold before the legislature will take action to enact policy. The "selling" of an issue means more than getting policymakers to agree that a program or proposal is a good one. In the play of power, to "sell" an issue, one must get policymakers to commit their support. Legislators signal that they are "sold" by committing their votes to a policy proposal. Woven through the data are reports that legislators exchange their votes to obtain benefits for their constituents. So, in the marketplace environment of the Individualistic political culture, an issue is "sold" by giving legislators something of value they can bring back to their constituents. In school

finance policy, that means a bigger state subsidy for education, or a subsidy formula with features that benefit as many different constituents as possible. It may also mean a tax program which increases the state subsidy and relieves the local tax burden. School Finance policy proposals which appeal to a broader constituency have a better chance of "selling" in the legislature than policy proposals which do not.

Information is power. How a policymaker organizes and uses information impacts significantly on the policymaking process. One informant described how the Governor can manipulate information to sell to the public the underfunding of education in the state budget. The Governor can present information about his budget proposal in a way which highlights what the budget does for education, rather than what it does not do. He can present facts in a simplified format, knowing that the general public does not understand the complexities of school finance policy. To constituents, the Governor's proposal may sound as if it provides a lot of money for education, and it may, even though actual funding levels have dropped. Nevertheless, if the proposal does not increase taxes, constituents may pressure legislators to accept such a proposal. While legislators themselves understand that education is being underfunded, the Governor's appeal to the electorate with a partisan analysis of his budget proposal may pressure a

reactive General Assembly to pass the Governor's budget.

Special interest groups are informal policymakers, but they are powerful and legitimate in their policymaking roles. Special interest groups maintain staffs whose only purpose is to participate in the process of formulating education policy. These include the Pennsylvania State Education Association, the Pennsylvania Federation of Teachers, the Pennsylvania Association of Elementary and Secondary School Principals, and to a lesser extent, the Pennsylvania School Boards Association. It was clear that lobbyists considered themselves insiders in education policymaking, and were considered insiders and important information sources by legislators and legislative staff. The Individualistic political culture does not encourage broad public participation in government; in this cultural environment, policy development is the work of professionals. Strong special interest groups provide a means for informal policymakers to maintain touch with constituents through the professionals who represent them.

In the play of power, special interest groups fulfill an essential role. They serve as agents empowered to participate in the play of power by the sector of the electorate which they represent. When special interest group lobbyists provide partisan analysis to formal policymakers, agree to some form of exchange, or in any way participate in the play of power, formal policymakers can be

assured that they do represent a particular constituency. Special interest groups are able to organize constituents to pressure formal policymakers to pass or not pass particular policy proposals; they function as brokers in the policy marketplace.

The number one problem in education is finance; the major policy battles in the General Assembly concern the distribution of money. It is neither unique nor surpsising that school finance is the number one issue in education in the Pennsylvania legislature. The statistical analysis of the ASPM data indicated that school finance is the chief issue in education among policymakers in all six sample states representing the full range of Elazar's political culture prototypes. Informants identified two issues which are at the basis of school finance policy in Pennsylvania: the amount of money to be allocated and the manner in which the money is distributed. In the marketplace atmosphere of the Pennsylvania policy arena, education, like everything else in government, has relative value. Education competes with other state funded programs for limited fiscal resources. School finance may also be a pawn in the exchanges which are part of the play of power. In the competitive marketplace environment of the Individualistic political culture, the level and distribution of funding for education becomes a source of intense political activity.

The development of the Basic Instructional Subsidy formula becomes the mechanism through which the level and distribution of educational resources are determined. The Basic Instructional Subsidy formula changes frequently, and, as one informant explained it, is twenty percent political. That political twenty percent becomes manipulated as a mechanism of control and exchange in the play of power with special factors such as density, superdensity, sparsity and supersparsity, and allows for the weighting of the formula in favor of one special interest group or another. Since education is the largest single item in the state budget, legislators make political decisions about whether they will support the budget based on their school subsidy.

The development of school finance policy reflects the marketplace atmosphere of the Individualistic political culture in several aspects. Policymakers exchange their support of Basic Instructional Subsidy formula for features in the formula which benefit their constituents. The formula is adjusted to garner as much support from as many different constituencies as possible. The exchange and adjustment which characterize the marketplace are also indicators that control is being exercised in the play of power.

The life expectancy of any given Basic Instructional Subsidy Formula is limited. In the marketplace, conditions

change. The Basic Instructional Subsidy formula is designed to address specific conditions and needs. As conditions and needs change, the Basic Instructional Subsidy formula must also change. As a mechanism of exchange for support of the budget, it must also address the needs of the policymakers whose support must be wooed in order to pass each new budget. An additional major consideration in the life expectancy of the Basic Instructional Subsidy is the current condition of the state's economy, which affects both the level of fiscal resources which the state has to distribute, and the demands from the local districts for state funding. The data indicate a clear and penetrating concern with the economy. Changes in the state's economy and rate of economic development affect both the availability of state subsidy as a mechanism of control, and the value the state subsidy has for policymakers. Thus, school finance policy must be revised frequently to produce a Basic Instructional Subsidy formula which reflects true economic and political conditions at a given time.

Taxes are an anathema, but if you must raise taxes, ask for more money for education. The hesitancy by the Pennsylvania General Assembly to impose taxes is related to its responsive nature since the levying of taxes would require an initiative on the part of the government. Since the Individualistic political culture values a responsive government, new tax initiatives are not pursued with enthusiasm.

There are occasions when the state government must raise taxes in order to meet its fiscal responsibilities. In order to garner the broad-based support for a tax proposal, two conditions must be satisfied. First, the proposal must be consistent with the dominant value system of the policy arena. Secondly, the program must allow for broad-based support.

In Pennsylvania, state policymakers can satsify these two conditions for a tax program by asking for an increase in taxes for education. Informants indicate that education is "palatable" to a wide variety of constituencies. Raising taxes to fund education is consistent with the Individualistic political culture, and with the play of power in policymaking. The Individualistic political culture has a deep concern with economic development. Informants reported that education is seen as a tool for economic development in Pennsylvania. Pennsylvania's economy is primarily an industrial one, based on the coal and steel industries, both of which have been in an economic depression for years. Educators and policymakers see education as a way of developing a pool of workers skilled in newer technologies and industries. With such a pool of available talent, the state may be able to attract new business and industry, and thus stimulate its economy. Education is seen as a tool of economic development worthy of investment.

As a mechanism of control in the play of power, education money is very attractive in the Pennsylvania policy arena. The state education subsidy is a very visible benefit which legislators can bring back to their constituencies. Because education funding is shared between the state and local levels of government, an increase in state subsidy may mean that less money must be generated at the local level. So, while a tax increase per se may be unpopular with constituents, a tax increase which includes money for education means tax relief at the local level, and is therefore more palatable. In exchange for their support of a tax proposal, policymakers can bring home to their constituents an increase in state subsidy which provides relief for the local tax burden. In addition, legislators reported that a legislator who was willing to vote for a tax bill had more influence over how the money generated by the tax than how it was to be spent. Thus, a tax vote can be exchanged for increased influence over resource allocation.

Categories of Policymaking Assumptions

The data collected in this study indicate that certain implicit assumptions govern the development of school finance policy in Pennsylvania. Although these assumptions are not written down and have no legal status, policymakers know and observe them. The ten assumptions which were identified through analysis of the data collected in this study can be divided into two categories: policy process

assumptions and policy content assumptions (Figure 6-1). Policy process assumptions are those which address how school finance policy is formulated in Pennsylvania, while the content assumptions relate to which school finance policy issues are addressed, and what is typically included in school finance policy. To divide the assumptions into two categories is somewhat artificial, since in the policy arena, what happens and how it happens are closely interrelated. Nevertheless, the organization of the assumptions into process and content categories highlights the fact that in Pennsylvania, policymakers aim at being both consistent with the value system of the policy arena and effective in achieving policy goals in what they do and how they do it.

Insert Figure 6-1 about here

All ten implicit assumptions are consistent with the characteristics of the Individualistic political culture. The data support these assumptions as those which guide the behavior of policymakers in the formulation of school finance policy. These ten policymaking assumptions, which can be culled from and supported by the data, provide evidence that the Individualistic political culture influences the content and the process of school finance policy developments in Pennsylvania. The assumptions also

Figure 6-1: Implicit Assumptions for Policymakers

POLICY PROCESS RULES

- Everything in government is relative.
- Nothing significant ever gets accomplished without the leadership having a hand in it.
- If a policy proposal has no chance of succeeding, don't bring it up in the General Assembly.
- The Education Committees are collegial and non-partisan; the Appropriations Committees are hierarchial and partisan.
- Special interest groups are informal policy actors, but they are powerful and legitimate in their policymaking role.
- Information is power.

POLICY CONTENT RULES

- The number one problem in education is finance.
- Taxes are an anathema, but if you must raise taxes, ask for money for education.
- The major policy battles in the General Assembly concern the distribution of money.
- The life expectancy of any given Basic Instructional Subsidy formula is limited.

support the play of power as a useful framework for understanding the exercise of control in policymaking. It is evident from the data that both political culture and the play of power affect the behavior of policymakers in Pennsylvania as they work to forge school finance policy.

The ten implicit assumptions discovered by this research highlight the boundaries within which school finance policy is formulated within Pennsylvania. The assumptions, in effect, define the field on which the school finance policy formulation game is played. The assumptions express the values, and "...the particular idiosyncratic cultures...the ways of thinking and the sense of available options of the key actions..." (Marshall, Mitchell and Wirt, 1985). The articulation of these ten assumptions seems to support the concept of the policymaker's assumptive world, since they define extra-legal limits within which policymakers operate in formulating school finance policy.

In a separate and subsequent analysis of case study data from Pennsylvania and another sample state, Marshall, Mitchell and Wirt (1985) found that policymakers' assumptive worlds specify who has the right and responsibility to initiate policy and define the uses of power in policymaking activities that are deemed appropriate. They found that the policymakers' assumptive worlds had the effect of maintaining a predictable environment, of building cohesion, and served both as barometers of change in the policy

culture, and as a means to translate ideas into an acceptable form. Certainly, the implicit assumptions identified in the Pennsylvania case study serve as excellent examples of the effects and implications of the assumptive worlds concept which Marshall, Mitchell and Wirt (1985) articulated.

IMPLICATIONS OF THE CASE STUDY

The findings in this study may be helpful to policymakers involved in the development of school finance policy. The findings presented here may provide some insight to policymakers as to how political culture and the exercise of control in the play of power combine to affect the process by which school finance policy is developed in one particular state. If policymakers are more aware of how culture and the play of power can affect their behavior and the assumptions they bring to the policy arena, they may make more conscious choices about their policymaking behavior and may increase their role effectiveness.

This study focused only on Pennsylvania. It is likely that unwritten assumptions effect the school finance policy formulation process in other states as well. The ASPM statistical data suggests that just as in Pennsylvania, the dominant political culture of other states combines with exercise of control in the play of power to effect the assumptions which govern the development of school finance

policy. The juxtapositioning of the Pennsylvania cast study data with the ASPM statistical data cross-validates four findings: that political culture affects the process through which educational finance policy is developed; the policymaking process is different in different states; that the values and expectations of policymakers may have a greater effect on policy outcomes than the actual resources of a state; and that policymakers operate within assumptive worlds as they play on the development of policy.

Data concerning the policymaking process in other states is essential to a more complete understanding of the ways in which political culture affects policymaking. Sharkansky (1980) has pointed out that the need exists to collect such data state by state. Gathering data about the policymaking process in states other than Pennsylvania and the other ASPM sample states will also provide the opportunity to develop a more comprehensive understanding of both the fundamental framework of policymaking and the state-specific idiosyncrasies which form the assumptive worlds of state policymakers.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Elazar, Daniel J. American Federalism: A View from the States, New York: Harper & Row, 1984.

Glaser, Barney G. and Strauss, Anslem L. The Discovery of Grounded Theory: Strategies for Qualitative Research, New York, Aldine Publishing Company, 1967.

Lindblom, Charles E. The Policy-Making Process, Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey: Prentice-Hall, Inc. 1980.

Marshall, Catherine, Mitchell, Douglas E., and Wirt, Frederick, "Assumptive Worlds of Education Policy Makers", Peabody Journal of Education, Vol. 62, No. 4, Summer, 1985.

Mitchell, Douglas E., Marshall, Catherine and Wirt, Frederick, "Building a Taxonomy of State Education Policies", Peabody Journal of Education, Vol. 62, No. 4, Summer, 1985.

Sharkansky, Ira "The Utility of Elazar's Political Culture", Plubius, Winter 1980, pp. 66-83.

Wirt, Frederick, Mitchell, Douglas E., and Marshall, Catherine, "Perceptions of State Political Culture by Education Policy Elites", Peabody Journal of Education, Vol. 62, No. 4, Summer, 1985.

Young, K., "Values in the Policy Process", Policy and Politics, Vol. 3, March, 1977, pp. 1-22.